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SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 6th MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Monday, 15 June 1992, at 3 p.m.

Chairman: Miss SETH (India)

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General debate (continued)

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Any corrections to the records of the meetings of this session will be consolidated in a single corrigendum, to be issued shortly after the end of the session.

The meeting was called to order at 3 p.m.

GENERAL DEBATE (continued)

1. Mr. RIBEIRO (Brazil) said that the events of the past few years had vastly altered the international scenario, creating new needs within UNICEF's area of activity. However, continued priority had to be given to developing countries because deeper structural imbalances in the international economic order limited their ability to overcome underdevelopment and poverty.

2. With regard to the 10 specific proposals listed in the report of the Executive Director, one called for demilitarization in the developing world: however, military spending in a number of developing countries was already at very low levels; in Brazil it was less than 1 per cent of GDP, and yet Brazil still had inadequate resources to meet social priorities. The emphasis should be placed instead on shifting resources from those countries which had traditionally accounted for the lion's share of global military expenditure to international cooperation in the economic and social fields.

3. Another proposal, regarding international action on debt, aid and trade, would create a new framework that would allow the economic reforms that were under way in the developing countries to provide better living conditions for the people and allow the promises made during the World Summit for Children to become realities.

4. UNICEF must concentrate on reaching the goals of the World Summit for Children. Millions of children world wide were unable to satisfy even their most basic needs, and their opportunities for social and economic development were therefore severely limited. The Board must establish priorities so that the determination shown by world leaders during the Summit could be translated into practical action.

5. His Government had undertaken a number of initiatives, including national child vaccination campaigns, the inclusion of the major provisions of the Convention on the Rights of the Child in the Constitution, and the establishment of a Ministry of the Child. A draft national programme of action had been submitted to UNICEF and a coalition comprising the executive and legislative branches, political parties, entrepreneurial and labour federations and the National Movement of Street Children had been established to implement the strategy outlined in it. Furthermore, 5,000 children's centres were to be constructed by the end of 1994 providing for the educational and health needs of 6.5 million children.

6. The structural adjustment programmes under way in developing countries were having a great impact on vulnerable social groups; paths to development must be found in which children were a central concern. The Rio Declaration, adopted at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, called for a concept of sustainable development in which the future of children must be a priority.

(Mr. Ribeiro, Brazil)

7. Brazil had participated in the Budget Format Reference Group, which had helped stimulate a process of dialogue between the Secretariat and some members of the Board; that exercise should be regarded as exceptional in nature. His delegation fully endorsed the Executive Director's recommendations to continue negotiations on all fronts and to prepare a study of the non-financial implications of a move from the current New York headquarters. It was to be hoped that the spirit of compromise seen in informal pre-Board consultations would make it possible to reach a decision on the question of the rotation of the Chairmanship of the Board.

8. Mrs. NDIAYE (Senegal) said that the problems of the most vulnerable social categories lay at the heart of Senegal's development strategies; mothers and above all children were central to Senegal's future. Senegal was characterized by rapid demographic growth; a reduced but still high rate of infant and child mortality; a precarious child health situation, despite the success of the expanded programme on immunization, which needed to be evaluated and reoriented; a school attendance rate which still fell short of the objective for the decade; an economic situation affected by drought, indebtedness and the constraints of structural adjustment programmes; and growing urbanization, with a high rate of migration to the capital, Dakar. In that situation, her Government had developed an institutional framework to ensure maximum efficiency for national projects and for programmes implemented with bilateral or multilateral cooperation.

9. Senegal's ratification of the Convention on the Rights of the Child expanded the legal framework already in existence in the Senegalese family code. A long tradition of stable political democracy had made possible the implementation of the programme of cooperation between UNICEF and the Government of Senegal for the period 1987-1991. The programme sought to alleviate women's work; provide training for women through functional literacy; and bring about their empowerment in economic and health matters. The evaluation of the programme had shown that not only macroeconomic aspects, but also the specific conditions of women and children, needed to be taken into account.

10. In support of the new programme of cooperation with UNICEF, her Government had expanded decentralization, affording regions unprecedented autonomy, so as to help the regional bodies monitor ongoing programmes and implement new activities as and when local needs were identified. Non-governmental organizations had defined the institutional framework of their activities with ministerial departments. A national family planning programme was being implemented. Those activities constituted the basis of the national plan of action for children which was being implemented at a cost of about 67 billion francs CFA.

11. Senegal's national plan of action for children aimed to halve the rate of malnutrition among children under 5; provide drinking water and sewage systems

(Mrs. Ndiaye, Senegal)

for all; and ensure that at least 80 per cent of schoolchildren completed primary education, all by the year 2000. To that end, resources had been reallocated to sectors concerned with children; all ministerial departments involved in the plan had sectoral programmes for children within their global programmes; public health programmes were being brought in line with WHO recommendations; and resources made available by the alleviation of debt-servicing were being reallocated to projects for the advancement of the most vulnerable groups.

12. The costs of national plans far exceeded national possibilities; Senegal believed deeply in the need for international action to alleviate or even write off African debt. Much was expected from the International Donors' Conference on Assistance to African Children, at which donor countries would be able to demonstrate their commitment to African children in real and concrete terms, and African countries would be able to submit projects for financing and conduct negotiations.

13. Mr. BLACK (National Committees for UNICEF) said that the National Committees played a vital role within UNICEF and, in the industrialized countries, were the primary link to the public. An emerging role in advocacy brought the National Committees into a broader area of partnership which had already yielded results in some countries in activities in support of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, preparation of the National Programmes of Action in follow-up to the World Summit for Children, and in the Baby-Friendly Hospital Initiative. That expanding role came at a time of growing difficulties for National Committees; the economic recession in many countries had made fund-raising efforts more challenging, and development priorities were shifting. In 1991 National Committees had none the less contributed 20 per cent of UNICEF's overall budget, and they continued to be in the forefront of private sector fund-raising that extended UNICEF programme activities throughout the developing world.

14. With respect to UNICEF's role in the context of the United Nations system, both in emergencies and in ongoing programme activities, he noted that coordination had not always proven to be effective in practice. UNICEF was a flexible organization which achieved results; it would be regrettable if it were held back by unnecessary bureaucratic requirements. UNICEF's efficiency reflected well on the whole United Nations system and should be encouraged. At the same time, the National Committees were encouraged that there was finally a definitive statement on population issues in the joint paper by UNFPA and UNICEF; they would welcome a stronger role for UNICEF in its collaboration with WHO on the issue of AIDS, and they believed that UNICEF should play a strong role on environmental issues.

15. The National Committees appreciated enhanced cooperation with the Secretariat, including their participation in discussions of the external relations component of the medium-term plan for 1992-1995. The policy paper on education for development was of great importance; it built on educational

(Mr. Black)

work carried out by the National Committees over the past two decades and outlined the shift from education about the problems of developing countries to a broader, more comprehensive concept of education for global citizenship.

16. UNICEF had a stronger role to play in responding to the needs of children caught in armed conflict. In accordance with the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the practice of using children as soldiers must be ended and UNICEF and the Executive Board must find ways of providing psychological help to child soldiers and to all children who had experienced armed conflict.

17. Much more assistance was needed to aid children in countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States and Central and Eastern Europe. However, children in those countries must be helped with additional money, not money that would otherwise have gone to countries previously classified as developing countries. The National Committees therefore endorsed the recommendation of the Executive Director in document E/ICEF/1992/L.14. Countries of the region that qualified for UNICEF aid on the basis of existing criteria should be assisted through supplementary funding, and non-qualifying countries should be assisted on an exceptional basis. The National Committees, at their annual meeting in May 1992, had decided to systematize their collective technical assistance to national committees in Central and Eastern Europe during the transition in those countries.

18. The National Committees were encouraged that a significant proportion of UNICEF's resources were being used in Africa, and that many posts in Africa had been upgraded. The International Donors' Conference on Assistance to African Children would be a critical opportunity to organize an international strategy for the future of Africa. Considering the myriad economic, environmental, health and political problems facing the people of sub-Saharan Africa, a galvanizing of efforts around national programmes of action by Africans themselves and by the international donor community was the best hope for the future. Governments must mount an effective effort while the opportunity was still there. The annual celebration of the Day of the African Child was an excellent way of drawing attention to the plight of children in Africa.

19. Mr. TREPCZYNSKI (Poland) said that, in implementing the decisions of the World Summit for Children and the provisions of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, for the first time in history responsibility for children was being shouldered jointly by Governments and international organizations, central and local administration, political and non-governmental organizations and the mass media.

20. In Poland, economic problems were the main obstacles to full implementation of the resolutions of the World Summit and to the elaboration of the National Plan of Action and implementation of all provisions of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. As in other countries of Central and Eastern Europe, the situation of a substantial number of children was

(Mr. Trepczynski, Poland)

deteriorating, for the State health care systems were disappearing, and the social services that provided the safety nets in industrial countries had not as yet been established. Children's educational and health facilities were being closed down. Under those circumstances, UNICEF should play a more active role in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe and in the Commonwealth of Independent States and provide support for the, as yet, weak governmental and social structures. The activities of UNICEF in implementing decisions 1990/5 and 1991/20 were encouraging, although the secretariat had not tapped the entire potential for action made available to it under those resolutions, and part of the funds could have been used in a more rational way. UNICEF's support to the countries of the region should be based on additional funding so as not to draw on the funds allocated to developing nations. The multiple new tasks which the UNICEF secretariat was facing in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe fully justified a reinforcement of the staff of the UNICEF office in Geneva.

21. UNICEF's breastfeeding campaign had met with widespread support in Poland's medical community and public opinion. A National Committee for Breastfeeding Promotion had launched many activities and had undertaken to organize about 30 baby-friendly hospitals by the end of 1992.

22. His delegation regarded comprehensive action for the benefit of African countries as indispensable and urgent. It supported the advocacy and social mobilization UNICEF was carrying out on many fronts; an active role of external relations was imperative in order to strengthen UNICEF's presence and efficiency. His delegation particularly supported the work of the Divisions of Public Affairs and Information. It accepted the Executive Director's recommendation for a review of administrative and management structures at UNICEF headquarters. It welcomed the work of the Reference Group in contributing to the clarity and transparency of the UNICEF budget. It noted the positive contribution UNICEF was making towards strengthening the role and operational functions of the United Nations system.

23. Mr. OSVALD (Observer for Sweden) said that reform and improvement of the systems for development were crucial to the cause of children. The Nordic countries had submitted the results of a study of the United Nations in the economic and social field as their contribution to the debate, and the United Nations system itself had examined the issues and had submitted some important and far-reaching proposals. The next step in the process was the high-level discussion by the Economic and Social Council at its forthcoming session, based on the report of the Secretary-General on restructuring and revitalization of the United Nations in the economic and social fields (A/46/578). The issues would be brought before the forty-seventh session of the General Assembly, as well.

24. In the view of his Government, reform meant strengthening the United Nations, not simply reducing costs. It would like to forge strong multilateral institutions with a high degree of integrity, and would like to

(Mr. Osvald, Observer, Sweden)

see a strong management capable of dealing with member countries through well-defined and transparent procedures. Such a multilateral system would be partners rather than clients, and membership would entail both rights and obligations. Governing bodies should engage in more discussion of policy and strategy and much less micro-management. A system of governance combining universality and efficiency and a predictable and sustainable funding system were also needed.

25. The unique role of UNICEF was to care for the world's main resource - its children. The goals for the 1990s were an important tool, and the Declaration of the World Summit for Children represented the political will to deal with those issues. His Government had endeavoured to fulfil its political commitment by increasing its support to UNICEF and to other children's programmes.

26. The Executive Board would consider National Plans of Action later in its current session. His delegation shared the concern about available resources for specific requirements, and emphasized the need for national budgets to reflect the commitments made in the Declaration. It was encouraging to see that developing countries themselves were incorporating capacity-building into National Plans of Action by offering suggestions on monitoring of new systems and strengthening of existing projects at the community level.

27. The General Assembly resolution on the strengthening of the coordination of humanitarian emergency assistance (A/RES/46/182) and the subsequent appointment of a high-level emergency relief coordinator had established the Organization's central role in the field of humanitarian assistance. Within its mandate, UNICEF continued to have an operational role in emergencies. That resolution had also emphasized the link between emergency assistance and long-term development, and finding ways to link activities in both fields was a new and important challenge to UNICEF. More and more emergencies were man-made, and dealing with children forced into active participation in war was another major challenge.

28. Africa continued to require special attention. The important role of women in development, investment in women and the girl-child, as well as education and family planning, were some important areas for action.

29. His Government would continue its support for the cause of the children of the world and the work of UNICEF. In order to shape a peaceful future, the well-being of children must remain high on the international agenda.

30. Baroness CHALKER of WALLASEY (United Kingdom) said that her delegation welcomed the Executive Director's practical approach to reform of the United Nations development system, which would make a constructive and positive contribution to the debate. Those ideas, along with the commitment to reform also expressed by the Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) at the May Governing Council session, should contribute to

(Baroness Chalker of Wallasey,
United Kingdom)

the discussion of reform at the forthcoming Economic and Social Council session. The opportunity to reinvigorate the system to meet the challenges of the current decade and beyond must not be lost. With regard to UNICEF in particular, the restructuring of its working methods agreed at the March meeting of the Executive Board was encouraging. It was vital to retain members' confidence in the budget process, and the review of the budget format should produce greater clarity in presentation of its financial management. The Executive Board should avoid the temptation of micro-management, bearing in mind that the goal of reform was maintaining and improving programme quality.

31. Turning to the subject of emergencies, her delegation commended the disaster management training plan initiative managed by UNDP and the Department of Humanitarian Affairs as a fundamental training package for developing countries in which their own managers could be assisted by United Nations and donor Government field staff. All UNICEF staff should be encouraged to participate. The United Kingdom had a continuing interest in the operations of the newly established Department of Humanitarian Affairs and its interaction with agencies such as UNICEF, and it intended to allocate its humanitarian aid funding where that aid would be used most effectively. Based on the report on emergency operations in 1991 and the positive relations between UNICEF and the new Department, the United Kingdom would be more involved in supporting UNICEF emergency actions in 1992.

32. The speed with which UNICEF, in cooperation with UNFPA and WHO, had responded to the pressing needs of the countries of Central and Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States had been impressive, and the level of collaboration had been exemplary. As to future policies for the region, UNICEF should concentrate primarily on support for programme action, using supplementary funds to meet the particular needs of vulnerable communities. In addition, UNICEF must work with the rest of the United Nations system to act as a clearinghouse for information on needs and assistance. It must also pay greater attention to the plight of women in the former Soviet Union, who lacked access to reliable contraception, and adequate facilities in gynaecological and maternity units. The health of women deserved at least as much attention as that of their children.

33. The drought in southern Africa was another critical issue. Her delegation supported the refocusing of UNICEF country programmes in order to tackle the emergency conditions in the region. While drought alleviation measures were clearly designed to respond to the current crisis, they must also assist the long-term development process, balancing emergency assistance with programmes for sustainable development. The United Kingdom also supported UNICEF's proposals for South Africa.

34. As a follow-up to the World Summit for Children, the National Plans of Action should play a role in informing both the future work of UNICEF and the

(Baroness Chalker of Wallasey, United Kingdom)

policies and aspirations of developing countries. The United Kingdom would continue to focus its assistance on the needs of those at greatest risk: mothers and children. It could offer assistance in new fields, including family planning, but, ultimately, developing countries must decide their own priorities. Her Government remained committed to the Declaration of the World Summit for Children, and, in practical partnership with developing countries, would advance the objectives set forth therein.

35. Mr. SHIN (Republic of Korea), commenting on specific areas of UNICEF's activity, said that the key role of women in attaining child survival and development (CSD) goals could not be overemphasized. The involvement of mothers had been crucial to the achievement of universal child immunization (UCI), and their participation would be essential for the programmes of the 1990s. New ways must be found to ensure that women became genuinely involved in the decision-making process also. It should be noted that evaluation procedures, which previously had concentrated on women as beneficiaries, currently stressed their active involvement in sectoral programmes. Further efforts should be made to collect gender-disaggregated data and to develop socio-economic indicators on women. Men must become involved in promoting the participation of women, as well. The issue of under-investment in the education of the girl-child must be addressed fully.

36. Although the AIDS pandemic was receiving increasing attention, its full impact was likely to surpass even the most pessimistic forecasts. Coordination between UNICEF and WHO was crucial in order to avoid overlapping mandates. UNICEF should continue to improve measurement capabilities and to promote a more systematic approach to the exchange of information on AIDS.

37. The Bamako Initiative provided a strong foundation on which sustainable health care could be developed, but several issues must be addressed before communities could be expected to provide adequate financial and management support for their health care. Consideration must be given to the current economic plight of many developing countries and the need for gradual strengthening of both financial and management capability. Decentralization of decision-making was a necessary first step towards increased community involvement. The next step should be the promotion of two-way decision-making so that primary health care services could appeal to communities both able and willing to pay for them. The use of "coverage curves" appeared to be an effective way to assess the needs of individual communities and to adapt primary health care (PHC) services accordingly.

38. Since sustainability was a primary goal of the Bamako Initiative, the question of how to finance future drug supply imports must be resolved. Accordingly, greater attention should be given to efforts to develop sustainable self-financing schemes. The lessons to be learned through efforts to restore pharmaceutical production capability in the newly independent States of the former Soviet Union would be useful in that connection.

(Mr. Shin, Republic of Korea)

39. National leadership was one common ingredient essential to success. UNICEF had clearly demonstrated its capability in the area of advocacy, but Governments had the duty to formulate and implement the necessary policies. The results of close cooperation between UNICEF and the Government of the Republic of Korea had been impressive. Its cooperation had progressed from an emergency phase through a child survival phase, and finally to a child development phase, culminating in its ratification of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Growing interest among the Korean people in UNICEF activities had resulted in funding from non-governmental groups. His Government reaffirmed its commitment to the Convention on the Rights of the Child and its full participation in efforts to achieve the goals of UNICEF.

40. Mr. MENEN (India) said that the period since 1989 had seen the emergence of a growing commitment to the reorientation of global priorities in order to improve the quality of life of millions of poor and needy people, especially in the developing world. One of the most visible manifestations of that process had been the global mobilization of efforts towards the preparation of national plans of action. In his own country the draft National Programme of Action had already been finalized. The Programme had involved the participation of various Governmment ministries and departments and discussions with leading voluntary organizations working in India. India was also taking active steps to ratify the Convention on the Rights of the Child, and was engaged in a regional effort to develop a Plan of Action for all the member countries of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC). It was his delegation's conviction that such regional efforts would strengthen UNICEF's global efforts to develop a consensus for action in that field.

41. During the past year, the Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) had continued to be the bedrock of India's child development efforts, which had been accorded international recognition in 1991. The ICDS experience, by virtue of its comprehensive scope, mirrored some of the most crucial issues relevant to current development planning and highlighted the need for community participation. There was now a major shift of emphasis in programme design towards the mobilization of beneficiaries in order to ensure their actual participation in development programmes. In terms of programme content, the ICDS had been used to extend a package of services to school dropouts and unmarried adolescent girls from poor families, with the aim of improving their nutrition and health and enhancing their literacy and skills. The aim was to present an alternative to early marriage and early motherhood.

42. If the desired goals for children were to be attained, however, it would ultimately be necessary to achieve a radical change in the status of women. That could only come about if women themselves were able to establish their own democratic institutions. Accordingly, in the past year the Government of India had established a National Commission for Women, which would monitor the implementation of legislation for the protection of women's rights and consider possible amendments. It had also set in motion a gender-awareness

(Mr. Menen, India)

campaign aimed at planners, policy makers and administrators. However, if the obstacles to programmes for women and children were to be removed, it was not enough merely to allocate resources and create bureaucratic structures or to try to change society's attitudes towards women through persuasion: women must have greater access to education, training and opportunities for earning a living. Various income-generation schemes for women were currently being reviewed as part of a comprehensive approach to the status of women.

43. In the context of such an integrated approach, his delegation welcomed the fact that UNICEF had specifically included family planning in the agenda for discussion. His delegation had requested such a discussion at successive sessions of the Executive Board, but it noted that the Executive Director's report on family planning tended to restrict UNICEF's commitment in that field. The overwhelming reality of a burgeoning population, which perpetuated poverty and threatened the very survival of the environment, underscored the need for direct intervention to promote family planning. However, family planning efforts could succeed only if women's perceptions of such programmes were radically changed, particularly in the developing countries - a change which could only come about within the framework of an organic integration of mother and child care, safe motherhood and immunization programmes with the family planning component. UNICEF should take up innovative schemes based on such an integrative approach and act as a catalyst for action in developing countries.

44. No amount of health care intervention could, however, have an impact on the fundamental problems of the poorest sections of the population unless the scourge of malnutrition was removed. While the ICDS programme was the mainstay of direct intervention to remove malnutrition among children and mothers, it was recognized that nutrition was a multi-dimensional problem which had a symbiotic relationship with development. India was therefore finalizing a National Nutrition Policy and was proposing a number of administrative arrangements which would ensure that nutritional considerations were duly taken into account in government policy instruments. It had also introduced in Parliament the Infant Milk Substitute and Infant Food Bill, which attempted to regulate the production, supply and distribution of infant milk substitutes, feeding bottles and weaning foods. In that connection, his delegation welcomed UNICEF's baby-friendly hospital initiative, and also its recent initiative aimed at building a world consensus on ending micro-nutrient deficiencies. The Fund should follow it up by augmenting country programme resources for prophylaxis and food-fortification programmes.

45. His delegation had noted with concern the reduction in expenditure on education in the period 1990-1991. Education was one field where dramatic results could be achieved even without an overall transformation of economic status: indeed it could itself trigger such a transformation. UNICEF and UNESCO must, therefore, prepare a plan of action similar to the Plan of Action of the Summit for Children, through an international consensus, and support community initiatives to prepare 10-year programmes of action with quantified targets.

(Mr. Menen, India)

46. India too was concerned at the failure of safety nets in large parts of Central and Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States. However, in view of the size of the problem and its unique nature and context, funding for those countries should be financed entirely out of special supplementary resources. There should be no depletion of UNICEF resources allocated for the country programmes of the developing countries.

47. His delegation endorsed UNICEF's efforts to emphasize the close links between environmental concerns and child survival and development, education, sanitation and water supply and nutrition programmes. At the same time, attention must be focused on the long-term financial sustainability of maternal and child health, particularly in the context of the structural adjustment programmes currently under way in most of the developing countries. Spending in the social sector was one of the earliest casualties, and large parts of Africa might soon be in a situation far more desperate than that facing the countries of Central and Eastern Europe. Accordingly, public opinion in the developed countries must be mobilized, and a special structural adjustment fund established to address the problems of the neediest.

48. In conclusion, his delegation noted with interest the attention being paid in UNICEF to the need for better administration and coordination of operational activities. While it was undeniable that finite resources should be properly allocated and managed, it was important to guard against any reform that resulted in, or even gave the impression of, excluding many countries from the decision-making process or of concentrating that process in the hands of a few.

49. Mr. DE MARCHANT ET D'ANSEMBOURG (Netherlands) said that, while his delegation fully supported the Executive Director's proposals, it did have some doubts concerning the direct links between some of the proposals and UNICEF's mandate, and indeed between the proposals and the rest of the Executive Director's report. In that context, he stressed the importance of setting priorities and urged UNICEF to refrain from taking on too many new issues and engaging in initiatives in areas that might be better dealt with by other agencies. The importance of priority-setting also held true for activities that did fall within UNICEF's mandate.

50. The Netherlands was fully committed to the principle of a "first call for children", enunciated in the Executive Director's second proposal. His country's Minister for Development and Cooperation had recently decided that, starting in 1993, a separate budget item would be reserved for the benefit of children in especially difficult circumstances.

51. Referring to the National Programmes of Action, his delegation took the view that both the report of the Executive Director and the progress report on the follow-up to the World Summit presented interesting, and at some points far-reaching, ideas on the subject. Further clarification and discussion of previous and current UNICEF activities would be needed in order to determine the Fund's future tasks and activities in that area.

(Mr. De Marchant et D'Ansembourg, Netherlands)

52. His delegation welcomed the forthcoming International Donors' Conference on Assistance to African Children, to be held in Dakar, Senegal, from 25 to 27 November 1992 and would revert to the topic at a later stage.

53. Discussion on UNICEF's role in the preparation of National Programmes of Action and in the organization of regional conferences must always be viewed in the context of the need to find the right balance between the Fund's field-oriented work and social mobilization activities on the one hand, and the follow-up to the World Summit for Children on the other.

54. His delegation also attached great value to UNICEF's emergency assistance. While recognizing the comparative advantage enjoyed by UNICEF in certain aspects of emergency operations, his delegation believed that the Fund should always be aware of its own responsibilities, and that emergency assistance should not distract UNICEF from its mainstream activities. With that in mind, he expressed some hesitation about the proposed recovery rate of 6 per cent, which resulted from the relative increase in emergency activities. At the same time, further information on the real costs and on the application of an "emergency" recovery rate by other United Nations agencies would contribute to fruitful discussion at the current session of the Board.

55. Given the difficulties arising in the Eastern European countries and the Commonwealth of Independent States, UNICEF must make sure that resources were not made available to countries unless they qualified according to objective standards. For the same reason, it must be efficient with its resources in terms of money and staff, and there must be coordination from the very beginning within the United Nations and among all international agencies involved.

56. Noting that at the previous session of the Executive Board, the need for transparent and user-friendly budget documents had been emphasized, he welcomed the results achieved by the Reference Group established to that end and the subsequent recommendations made by the Executive Director.

57. His delegation had taken note of the suggestions and proposals of the Executive Director in respect of the administration of UNICEF. Although it had not yet studied those ideas in detail, it shared the view of the Executive Director that the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly were more appropriate forums in which to discuss such reforms. It took the view that proposals such as the enlargement of the Bureau should be discussed in the light of the outcome of the general discussions of the Nordic United Nations project.

58. Mr. CORNAZ (Switzerland) said that two basic concerns should be paramount in UNICEF's operational principles, namely, reinforcement of national capabilities and the need for a comprehensive or holistic approach.

59. With regard to the former, it was now generally recognized that each country must be able to take responsibility for its own development, defining the policies it wished to follow and implementing the programmes for which it had opted. Unfortunately, developing countries did not necessarily have such a capability; moreover, creating such capabilities required time and, above all, firm resolve. The need to strengthen national capabilities was especially relevant to UNICEF, because of its operational nature and because it maintained cooperative links with the various ministries in the country concerned, and often with non-governmental organizations. In addition, UNICEF operated in fields for which national institutional capacities were often relatively weak, such as health or community development.

60. All UNICEF programmes should make explicit provision for the measures needed to create and strengthen national capabilities, and all evaluations should assess the progress made in that direction and the results obtained.

61. With regard to the comprehensive or holistic approach, he said that there was a growing awareness that there could be no hope of promoting better development for children - and particularly for children who were at greatest risk - unless all the factors involved were considered and unless the interdependence of the economy, health, environment, culture, legislation and social structures were taken into account. The Summit for Children, and still more so the Earth Summit being held in Rio de Janeiro, clearly showed the need for such an approach. UNICEF was especially well-placed to encourage that comprehensive approach in the relevant countries, in cooperation with the other development agencies. Such an approach must not neglect the need to set priorities, thus guaranteeing greater sustainability for projects and action programmes within the context of a genuine development strategy.

62. Mr. PEREZ-INFANTE (Spain) congratulated UNICEF on the truly praiseworthy work it had done during the past year mentioning, in particular, the studies and publications of the International Centre for the Development of the Child; UNICEF's efforts and cooperation activities to promote women's full participation in development programmes; and its work in the Ibero-American region together with regional bodies and arrangements such as SAFLAC.

63. In Spain, UNICEF was highly regarded. For the past several years the Government had been endeavouring to increase Spain's contribution to UNICEF, which currently amounted to almost US$ 3 million, and it would continue to do so. At the local level, the Assembly of the Spanish Federation of Towns and Provinces had agreed to accede to the World Declaration on the Survival, Protection and Development of Children.

(Mr. Perez-Infante, Spain)

64. In compliance with the undertaking it had assumed at the World Summit for Children, the Government had drawn up a plan of action relating to the child, which would be officially communicated to UNICEF during the current year. Other measures included action in the legislative and educational spheres, including new legislation dealing with the education system in general and with the conditions and syllabus for children under six years of age. In addition, a new organic law had just been approved to regulate the competence and procedure of juvenile courts. Another current objective was to embody the rights of the child in a single legal text. There was also a plan to promote health and hygiene at school-level.

65. The scope of social services was likewise being expanded by means of a concerted scheme for the provision of basic social services throughout the country's autonomous regions. Campaigns were being launched to promote public awareness of the Convention on the Rights of the Child throughout Spain, and the Ministry of Social Affairs was sponsoring various studies and publications relating to children's problems and needs. Vocational training was also available in respect of all tasks related to children. The authorities were determined that promoting the well-being of the family and children should be a central concern in all spheres of government activity. The authorities were also active in international cooperation in that field; for historical and traditional reasons, such action had focused chiefly on Latin America. One example was an international meeting for children to be held in Madrid and Seville, with the participation of Spanish and Latin American children, towards the end of 1992. The Spanish Government continued to hope, however, that Europe would have an instrument of its own in order to promote the rights of the child.

66. He suggested that the Board should consider the possibility of proclaiming a world day for the rights of the child, to be observed each year, possibly on 20 November, the day on which the General Assembly had adopted the Convention on the Rights of the Child, with a view to promoting wider awareness of the rights of children and to obtain increased resources.

67. Mr. DOGRAMACI (Observer for Turkey) said that his delegation wholeheartedly supported the observance, the following day, of the Day of the African Child, adding that attention should also be given to the intolerable situation of children in other places, notably Sarajevo and Dubrovnik.

68. Among the most striking developments in the past year had been the promotion of breast-feeding and the "baby-friendly" hospital initiative, which had become an important component of that effort. An international conference to promote breast-feeding had been held in Ankara, 1991, and a campaign to identify baby-friendly hospitals in countries all over the world had been launched. The Conference had adopted a declaration to the effect that all women should be able to breast-feed and that all infants should be fed exclusively on breast milk for at least four months after they were born. The attainment of that goal would require commitment and social mobilization,

(Mr. Dogramaci, Observer, Turkey)

and it had been noted that obstacles to breast-feeding within the health system, the workplace and the community would have to be eliminated. He was pleased to report that Europe's first two hospitals recognized as baby-friendly were located in Turkey, in Ankara and Istanbul, and that a further two had been awarded a certificate of commitment. It was gratifying to see that a large number of countries had taken steps to implement the baby-friendly hospital initiative, and that the programme to train health officials to promote the initiative had been launched, notably in Central and Eastern Europe in partnership with UNICEF, La Leche League and the International Baby Food Action Network. However, since, in developing countries, the great majority of babies were born outside hospital, the scope of the initiative must be expanded to include all types of health care centres, midwives and other trained health workers.

69. His delegation would appreciate an update from the Executive Director on progress made towards ending free and low-cost supplies of infant formula to hospitals and maternity units. He congratulated the Executive Director and the Director-General of WHO for their success in coming to an agreement with the infant formula manufacturers in that connection, and was pleased to report that distribution of free or low-cost infant formula in maternity wards was no longer permitted in Turkey.

70. Another product of collaboration between UNICEF, WHO and the International Paediatric Association (IPA) was the publication International Child Health which had been launched in the second half of 1990 and had since continued to be published on a quarterly basis, with a wide circulation. The January 1992 issue was devoted exclusively to breast-feeding and the baby-friendly hospital initiative.

71. The Government of Turkey had prepared its draft national programme of action in accordance with the Plan of Action of the World Summit for Children. The goals of the World Summit were being closely monitored by the Turkish Intersectoral Board for Children.

72. His delegation was pleased to note the progress being made on the children's vaccine initiative. It supported the effort to improve and develop new vaccines for the principal childhood diseases and the establishment of a secretariat and a management committee for the initiative. UNICEF's role in support of national EPI programmes and operations research at the country level was to be commended.

73. Noting UNICEF's increasing activities in connection with AIDS, his delegation urged the Fund to use its expertise to bring about changes in behaviour, attitudes and practices, while encouraging research aimed at developing preventive vaccines. All agencies should be encouraged in their efforts on behalf of AIDS research.

(Mr. Dogramaci, Observer, Turkey)

74. His delegation noted the active participation of UNICEF in the safe motherhood initiative. Efforts to integrate safe motherhood with the child survival effort were bound to have a favourable impact on that area of health, which had been too long neglected.

75. The close collaboration of UNICEF and WHO with non-governmental organizations, notably the International Paediatric Association, had been of the utmost value. Ways of increasing the contribution of paediatricians to the survival of children had been explored at length at the four meetings so far held of the joint IPA/UNICEF/WHO task force, and it had been decided that the focus of that collaboration should be on initiatives at both the country and the regional level. Members of the task force had also expressed particular interest in the plight of children in especially difficult circumstances.

76. On the basis of recommendations emerging from a 1990 seminar in the Dominican Republic, a plan of action for research related to child abuse had been laid down, and efforts were being made to find the necessary funds to carry out the relevant studies.

77. His delegation commended UNICEF, WHO and the other organizations which had participated in the three missions organized by UNICEF to the countries of the former Soviet Union, which had resulted in timely and valuable documentation indicating that new requirements for UNICEF assistance had emerged in those countries in the aftermath of political upheaval. Conditions facing children in some of the recently established States were very similar to those in, for example, Mexico or Brazil. The needs of the Central Asian States merited the involvement of UNICEF in a measured, precisely targeted fashion without, however, diverting funds from developing countries currently supported by UNICEF. He pointed out that his Government was currently providing those countries with a broad range of technical and other assistance.

78. The Executive Director's views on the need to broaden the scope of the Bureau and expand its role were valuable. His delegation believed that the Bureau should meet more regularly and should review issues in greater depth. With regard to the talk about the restructuring of the United Nations, he said that while greater effectiveness and reduced duplication were admirable aims, it was also necessary to preserve the specific strengths and expertise of individual agencies. In particular, UNICEF's remarkable flexibility, and its skill in delivering concrete, measurable results on the ground without delay, should not be impaired.

79. Mr. SEZAKI (Japan) said that his delegation was pleased to see that many countries, developed and developing alike, had formulated national programmes of action pursuant to the World Summit for Children. The Japanese Government had submitted its own national programme of action to UNICEF in January 1992, stating that it would increase its financial contribution to UNICEF to a level

(Mr. Sezaki, Japan)

commensurate with its economic capacity. It was also taking steps to join the more than 100 countries that had already ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

80. Africa was the area in most need of UNICEF assistance, and in 1991 Africa had received the largest allocation of UNICEF funds - 36 per cent of its resources. The forthcoming OAU Donors' Conference on Assistance to African Children, in which Japan would participate, would be taking up the question of even more assistance. His delegation supported UNICEF's efforts to strengthen its already active role in tasks such as promoting the Bamako Initiative. He had attended a recent summit meeting in Atlanta, Georgia, hosted by former President Carter of the United States, on guinea-worm disease. Since 1988, Japan had provided some US$ 50 million towards drinking-water projects in Nigeria, Ghana, Togo and Benin. He appealed for further efforts in order to eradicate guinea-worm disease by the year 2000.

81. Japan endorsed UNICEF's activities in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union, including joint action with WHO and other United Nations agencies, which were consistent with its global mandate; however, given the limited resources available and UNICEF's primary task in developing countries, the focus and scale of those activities should be clearly defined and monitored. UNICEF should support national policy formulation and the development analysis. As for programme support activities, the differing economic and social conditions from country to country called for a differentiated approach: countries with low per capita GNP and high mortality rate among under-five-year-olds should qualify for UNICEF assistance. His delegation could in general accept the recommendation that UNICEF should pursue three options: to maintain the present scope and scale of support for policy, analytical and advocacy work throughout the region; to provide programme support for "qualifying" countries from supplementary funds; and to provide programme support for "non-qualifying" countries on an exceptional basis. The proposal about staffing requirements would, however, have to be studied carefully. It was also essential to collaborate closely with other agencies, especially WHO and UNDP. His delegation welcomed UNICEF's action to ensure close collaboration with UNDP, including a common United Nations office should a field presence be required. In that regard, resources should be managed more rationally so as to make more available for work in the field, and a review of UNICEF's headquarters administrative and management structure should be vigorously pursued.

82. In 1991 UNICEF income had come to US$ 807 million, $14 million less than in 1990 and $51 million less than the estimates contained in the 1991 medium-term plan. UNICEF had said that the shortfall was due to the high value of the United States dollar during the year, and that Government contributions in local currencies to general resources were actually higher than anticipated; in any event, the economies of many developed countries were declining or still in recession, while demand for available resources had increased considerably and would probably continue to do so. He therefore

(Mr. Sezaki, Japan)

hoped that UNICEF would exercise great caution in forecasting its income and intensify its fund-raising efforts accordingly.

83. His delegation welcomed UNICEF's involvement and it looked forward to the report which was to be submitted to the Executive Board, at its 1993 session. UNICEF's request for a 6 per cent surcharge on emergency programmes seemed reasonable, in light of the growing list of emergency operations and the need to avoid cross-subsidization from general resources. As ACABQ pointed out, however, the question whether national committees and NGOs should continue to be exempted from the surcharge should be examined carefully.

84. On the matter of greater clarity concerning the linkage between programme and budgetary matters, the criteria for establishing project and core posts and UNICEF budget documents, his delegation greatly appreciated the hard work done by the Reference Group and the Secretariat. It was ready to make detailed comments on the recommendations before the Board and on the suggestions of the Advisory Committee, in the hope that, in 1993, the budget would be in a much clearer format. His delegation also appreciated UNICEF's detailed report about headquarters accommodation; the second option mentioned appeared realistic on the grounds of geographical advantage and financial savings alike.

85. Mrs. NGOMBA (Observer for Cameroon) said that the challenge of the 1990s was to seek not mere survival but a better standard of life and a complete eradication of the causes of conflict, ignorance, poverty, disease and crippling economic and social conditions. The need for a calculated approach had become even more imperative since the end of the cold war and the resultant political, economic and social restructuring. Experience of the multilateral process had shown that the response to such changes depended to a large extent on the political processes at work and the negotiating skills and strategies of the major international players and their partners. UNICEF had always played a leading role in the crusade for change; it should therefore have immense opportunities, in the current world climate, for intensifying its strategies, both in priority-setting and in galvanizing international awareness and commitment to the goals set forth in the World Declaration on the Survival, Protection and Development of Children. Although UNICEF had done much during the past few years to change the lives of several million children and women throughout the world, a great deal still remained to be done.

86. Her Government greatly appreciated UNICEF's role in the immunization campaign and, although still a long way from that goal, was making every effort to attain the 75 per cent target which had been set in 1990. Cameroon also appreciated UNICEF's assistance in launching the Bamako Initiative in three provinces and the favourable impact on the availability of rural primary health care. The country's programme still placed major emphasis on subjects such as reducing maternal and infant mortality, wider immunization, better education for women and girls, better nutrition for children through baby-friendly hospitals and basic education for mothers, clean water and

(Mrs. Ngomba, Observer, Cameroon)

better sanitation, and a review of government policies in urban areas to deal, inter alia, with the problem of street children and crime.

87. Her delegation was grateful for UNICEF's efforts on behalf of Africa in particular and the developing world in general; the activities initiated and financed by UNICEF in celebrating the Day of the African Child illustrated UNICEF's commitment to improving the plight of the entire African continent. Malnutrition and disease, particularly AIDS, were increasing; and the continent's debt burden was such that, throughout the 1980s, certain international financial institutions had taken more out of the continent than they had put in. The Executive Director's report (E/ICEF/1992/2) did provide some hope, however, and pointed to opportunities for positive change.

88. Given the ongoing process of democratization in Africa, UNICEF should enhance its advocacy strategy and intensify its traditional role in promoting, through other agencies and financial institutions, measures to promote adjustment with a human face and ensure that human development was at the centre of all programmes and strategies. It should also consider further ways of raising funds in addition to convincing African Governments to reorient their expenditure towards social welfare programmes; without a reinforced fund-raising policy, the Executive Director's 10 specific proposals for a new world order, particularly his recommendations about reducing Africa's debt and providing the continent with sufficient external support to permit internal reform and recovery, could not be achieved.

89. Her delegation strongly commended the forthcoming International Donors' Conference on Assistance to African Children, which would provide a unique opportunity for African Governments and their partners to reassess priorities and commitments to a common strategy, and would facilitate discussion of supplementary funding directed towards development projects rather than to short-term emergency interventions.

The meeting rose at 6 p.m.